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LEVEL news
Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

Volume 3, Number 3**March 8, 1995****Levels Reference Study Update****Canada Responds To IJC's '94 Report**

The Canadian Government has responded to the International Joint Commission's 1994 report on ways to deal with changing Great Lakes-St. Lawrence water levels.

In a document transmitted to the Commission by Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet, the Government outlined responses to each of the recommendations contained in the Commission's March 1994 report.

Action Planned

Among planned actions are moves to restrict placement of fills in boundary waters and to address existing fills in the Niagara River.

Environment Canada will continue to provide emergency water level information and to inform citizens about how the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system works through its information office in Burlington.

Shoreline Management

The Government endorsed the Commission's recommendations urging comprehensive shoreline management as the principal means of alleviating shoreline damage. It also supported the Commission's call for an ecosystem approach to managing water levels.

Other IJC News

The Commission has increased to 10 the number of members on its International St. Lawrence River Board of Control.

Mayor Peter B. Yeomans of Dorval, Québec, and **Dr. Frank Sciremammano** of Rochester, New York, will fill the two new Board positions.

Their three-year appointments were effective February 8.

Meanwhile, after considering a recommendation for a Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Advisory Board, the Commission, "has decided not to establish such an advisory board at this time."

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Board Meetings

Plan to attend the following meetings with the public:

- International St. Lawrence River Board of Control, Dorval, Québec, May 15.
- International Lake Superior Board of Control, Sault Ste-Marie, Ontario, June 27.
- International Niagara River Board of Control, Niagara-on-the-Lake, September 28.

All sessions will be held in the evening. Details on exact times and places will follow in future issues of *Level News*.

It's Not Too Late To Get On the List - Readers Appreciate The Information

To date, nearly 1,300 people have indicated they wish to remain on the mailing list for the **Level News** and the monthly **Water Level Bulletin**.

Readers have until the end of March to indicate whether they would like to continue receiving the package. After that date, those who have not responded will be removed from the mailing list. You can respond by returning the survey card that was included in your package last month, by sending a note to our address below.

More than 250 respondents made comments or asked questions. The vast majority felt the newsletter and water level bulletin are useful; some even offered to pay for the service. An annual subscription fee may be considered at some point in the future.

Lake Level Update

Water levels of Lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Erie declined in February, while Lake Ontario's level remained unchanged.

Lake Superior began March at 7 cm below its seasonal average, while Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, Erie and Ontario were all above their averages by 13, 21, 28 and 10 cm respectively.

Precipitation over the Great Lakes basin in general was about 20% below its average for February. Lake Superior received more precipitation than average, while the other lakes received less than their averages for the time of year.

Lake Ontario is expected to rise in the next several weeks, but below average snow pack means that the seasonal increase will probably not be dramatic. Water levels on the middle Great Lakes are forecast to begin their seasonal rise sometime in March. Unless extremely wet conditions occur, the possibility of significant flood or erosion damage will be low.

Generally warmer temperatures than last winter have left the Great Lakes with a light ice cover. Mostly open water is forecast for Lake Erie by mid-March,

and Lake St. Clair's ice cover is forecast to be well into its spring decay by that time.

Open Houses

Learn more about lake levels and shoreline hazards at:

Port Colborne Public Library, March 14 from 7 to 9 p.m. A similar open house was held in Beamsville on March 7.

Contact:

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority,
(905) 227-1013.

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